CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies News

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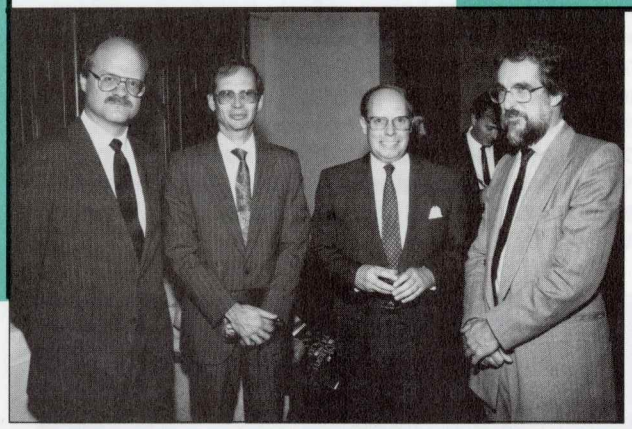

R. French (left), Provincial Minister for Communications, Dean Carreau (UQAM), Dean Szabo (Concordia), Dean Boucher (U de M)

From the Dean's Desk

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From the Dean's Desk

Freedom to and freedom from

As parapublic non-profit institutions, universities enjoy the rare and in many ways dubious privilege of being able to concern themselves with matters of culture, civilization, and fundamental knowledge. Ideally, this **freedom** of the universities **to** determine their own courses of action can be expected to translate into the pursuit of academic excellence and the creation of pools of expertise and scholarship accessible to and serving the community at large.

Unfortunately, however, universities are not at all **free from** the financial exigencies that drive profit-oriented corporations. Instead of discussing matters of academic interest and concern, university professors spend much of their time talking about accumulated deficits, carrying charges, the matching grants formulas that link universities with the research needs of business and industry, etc.

While it is clear that, like all other corporate citizens, universities must strive to balance their budgets and live within their means, governmental norms dictate the fiscal conduct of universities. We must therefore find imaginative ways of ensuring that our **freedom to pursue knowledge** is not totally eroded by our lack of **freedom from fiscal incompatibilities**.

One such way is the development and management of joint graduate programs. We rejoice in the fact that the joint Ph.D. in Communication involving the Université de Montréal, the Université du Québec à Montréal, and Concordia University is now a reality. The combined new resources that were granted to the three universities by Québec to launch this program were two additional professors and one additional secretary, to be shared by the universities in whatever way they considered appropriate. Since neither two nor one is divisible by three, the **joint** nature of this program and the savings derived from this jointness are clearly underscored by this investment decision. However, the actual financial needs even for this joint program far exceed the governmental support for the implementation of the program. We are obliged by our nature as a university to pursue knowledge, but once again we are seriously hampered by an inadequate financial base. At present, Concordia University is a partner in three joint doctoral programs: the Ph.D. in Administration, involving the Université de Montréal, the Université du Québec à Montréal and McGill University; the Ph.D. in Religion involving the Université du Québec à Montréal and Concordia; and the mentioned Ph.D. in Communication. Several other joint programs involving Concordia are on the drawing board.

One of the academically and culturally exciting aspects of this development is the fact that Montréal is in this way becoming a model for an ideal form of Canadian graduate education. Joint

programs between universities with different cultural and linguistic traditions undoubtedly encourage and entice students from other parts of Canada and elsewhere to study in Montreal and avail themselves of these bilingual and bi-cultural opportunities.

Ultimately, the links between universities, professors, and students of the different Montreal universities may for the building blocks for the creation of a permanent Montreal University Centre.

M. E. Szabo

Philosophy is the heart of culture

Philosophy is at the very heart of culture throughout history: many people want to acquaint themselves with the collective wisdom of mankind – to find answers to such age-old questions as "Who am I?", "What is Knowledge?", "What is Truth?".

A profound need to understand ourselves draws many people to study philosophy. Although philosophy may not have a direct link to our professional life, it provides a tool for personal and intellectual growth.

"People do not come to philosophy because they want nice jobs," notes Dr. Vladimir Zeman, director of graduate studies in philosophy at Concordia. "More than fifty per cent of graduate students come to philosophy because of personal interest. This is a degree that people do for themselves or as a stepping-stone to a **Ph.D.**"

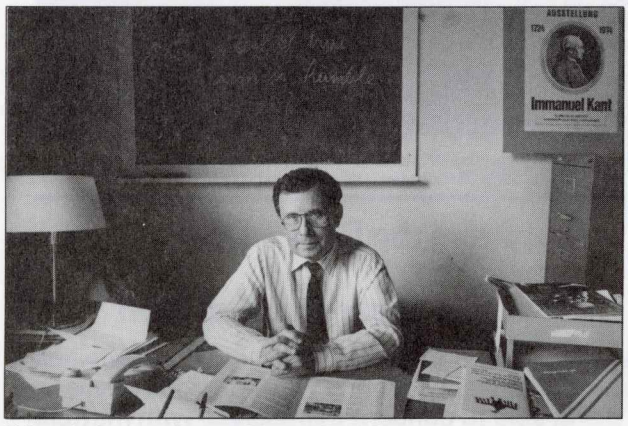
Students of philosophy at the graduate level soon discover, however, that the purpose of philosophy isn't just to answer personal questions – but to create a whole new level of questions in the context of a larger background. Graduate students relate these questions to culture, history and science, and upon graduation they find themselves called upon by society to serve a number of professions that require ethical decisions.

Because society now recognizes the valuable contributions of philosophy, philosophers find themselves called upon to examine questions raised by the problems associated with the disposal of nuclear wastes, to discuss business ethics, to act as consultants to legislative bodies or prison authorities, to settle ethical questions in law – and they are hired by hospitals to advise doctors and medical ethics committees confronted by life-or-death situations.

Scientists have always been influenced by the work of philosophers: Albert Einstein credited the work of David Hume and Ernest Mach for his rejection of the theory of absolute time. Today, scientists and philosophers have become partners in studies of mathematics, computer science, and medicine. Philosophy has become indispensible in the development of social science and psychology, and in theoretical linguistics and the field of artificial intelligence.

Concordia's philosophy program provides students with the knowledge they need to develop analytical and ethical systems essential to almost all professions and to walks of life. Proper analysis implies the clarification of terms and the examination of logical connections. But in addition to being a method, philosophy reveals the diversity of approaches to essential problems of ethics in law, science, politics, and aesthetics.

The kinds of work some graduates of Concordia's program are being called upon to do reflects this trend. Zeman explained that one former graduate now works in public affairs management in Toronto, an information clearing house which provides surveys of recent publications for government officials; another decided to go into law before completing his M.A. and is simultaneously completing his philosophy thesis and a law degree.



Philosophy Graduate Program Director: Dr. V. Zeman

Concordia's philosophy program offers two 45-credit Master of Arts options: an M.A. with thesis and an M.A. with research papers. Both programs are designed to be as broad as possible; they do not specialize in any particular philosophy. Students whose background is inadequate must do a qualifying year to obtain the equivalent of an Honours degree. Applicants engaged in careers or with other commitments have the option of completing their qualifying year over a longer period of time.

Students have a wide range of subjects to choose from when deciding on a thesis topic; graduate courses range from Hume's moral philosophy to the philosophy of law, and include courses in feminist ethics, phenomenology, philosophy of art and philosophy of the social sciences. Faculty and student research includes history of philosophy, philosophy of logic, ethics, and political philosophy and value theory. Research also covers the philosophy of science, metaphysics and epistemology. One thesis last spring defended Cassirer's Contribution Towards a Philosophical Understanding of Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

Due to the fact that conceptual and logical analysis is important to the study of philosophy, the program provides students with unique and rarified skills that have useful applications in a number of fields. Some students enter the master's program in philosophy to round out another area of interest, such as the humanities, art education, or business administration. Graduate students in Concordia's Department of Philosophy meet students from diverse backgrounds; many study philosophy after they have completed other degrees or started in a profession. They vary in age considerably. Although some are in their early twenties, many are over thirty and a large number are in their fifties; this year the oldest student is actually 84 years old.

There are many extracurricular activities in the department. Roughly twice a year, the department publishes a journal called Gnosis, to which many universities subscribe. Students organize seminars to present the papers to discuss philosophy programs or philosophy books. Graduate and undergraduate students work together to administer and organize the department's Philosophy Club and its activities.

Whatever personal reason each student has for studying philosophy, ethics has become a growth industry linking philosophy with society's need to determine which paths to pioneer. It helps break down barriers between philosophical ethics and practical answers to difficult issues. W. O. Quine of Harvard once argued that knowledge is a seamless web – that science might concern itself more with direct observation than philosophy, but the difference is a matter of degree.

That matter of degree is the food of philosophical discussion; what is clear is that both disciplines can borrow from each other to benefit humanity.

For further details, call (514) **848-2500**, or write to Vladimir Zeman, Graduate Program Director for Philosophy – Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, PR-302, Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1M8

Physics: Achievement and Excellence

Lean and mean. They're the business buzzwords of the day. But they might just have an academic application as well, as a motto for the Graduate Program in Physics at Concordia. Listen to how Program Director Sushil Misra tells it:

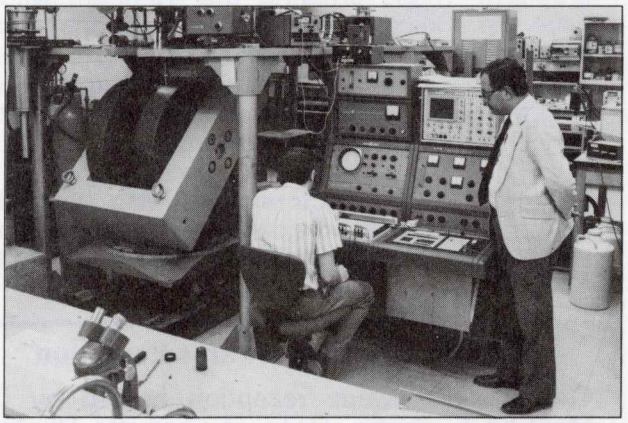
"When I took over as Graduate Program Director, the emphasis was more on achieving high enrolment than on the quality of the programs," he said in a recent interview. "As a result we had students who weren't carrying their weight in terms of the quality of their research work. So we decided to trim out the dead wood."

In 1984, following this change in direction from quantity to quality, a consultants's report gave the Graduate Program in Physics much better marks than it had received in 1978, the year the of the last appraisal, and the year that Misra first became Graduate Program Director.

Even yet, his system of organization involves a regular six-month review of students' research work to ensure it is of an acceptable quality. If it isn't, and the quality of the work doesn't improve, a student may be asked to leave the program.

Faculty members face equally high standards. Misra points out that some feathers were ruffled when made it a requirement that in order to work as thesis supervisors professors must be active researchers. To qualify, those supervising master's level theses must have published at least some research papers in refereed journals within the past five years, and those supervising doctoral level theses must have a considerably stronger continuous publications record.

"Today," he says, "we are getting students who want to come to Concordia because they know



Dr. S. Misra in the Electron Paramagnetic Resonance Laboratory

that we offer quality graduate programs. They don't just come here because they couldn't get accepted somewhere else.

"Ours is a small but quality program. We can't impress by virtue of our size or number. But we are getting recognition not only from students but from our sister universities as well. And we take pride in house-cleaning, in getting rid of dead wood, and in keeping things organized."

In fact, Misra says, he was one of the first program directors in the university to set criteria for thesis supervision. Other departments now call and ask for his organizational advice.

But, as is often the case, high standards produce good results. Despite its relatively small size and youth – both the M.A. and Ph.D. programs were started less than 20 years ago – the department has been producing an average of five Master's graduates and one Doctoral graduate every year. As well, with only eight faculty members who qualify as active researchers, the department has on the average published anywhere from five to eight research papers in refereed journals per year.

Research involves both theoretical and experimental approaches to solid state physics; experimental research into radiation physics, with special attention to radiation, dosimetry, radiation therapy, radiobiology and the fabrication of a high-technology device for the detection of nuclear radiation; and theoretical research into elementary particle physics, high energy physics, nuclear physics, and biophysics.

Research funding is provided by both levels of government, and grants from Ottawa alone exceeded $100,000 last year.

The department is recognized internationally for its work, and faculty members have travelled abroad to lecture, have been published in international journals, have collaborated with renowned specialists elsewhere, and have participated in international scientific conferences.

Students must state their research interests upon applying to the department and they are matched with an academic supervisor upon entry into the program. Those entering the 45-credit M.Sc. have the choice of two program options – one involving a thesis, the other involving a report. The report allows a greater concentration on course work, while the thesis allows a greater concentration on original research.

Students at the doctoral level also have the option of attending on a part-time basis, but must complete their degree within a time equivalent to that allowed for full-time studies. Those attending full-time must complete the program in five years. The bulk of a doctoral program consists of an original major research project.

Enrolment now stands at a total of twenty students in the M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs. Between twenty and thirty apply to the graduate programs every year, although only five to ten are admitted. They include local CEGEP (community college) professors seeking to upgrade their credentials and salary range, as well as those employed in the private sector, and recent graduates from undergraduate programs. Approximately one in four students is a member of the work force. Most are Canadians or landed immigrants, although the department does attract outstanding international students.

Physics students enjoy free access to the university's computer system for their thesis research, as well as access to the department's electron para-magnetic resonance laboratory and the micro-processor laboratory.

The career prospects for these students are good, and many graduates find work at local CEGEPs, as well as in the private sector including such well-known companies as Mitel and Spar Aerospace.

Those seeking further information can call (514) 848-3270, or write to the department at 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, H-915, Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1M8

Profile: Graduate Awards Reception

The annual awards reception hosted by Dr. Manfred E. Szabo, Dean of Graduate Studies, was held Friday October 23rd in the Hall Building of Concordia University. This reception recognizes the achievements of the 1987 graduate award winners and celebrates their accomplishments. Such recognition acknowledges the developing maturity of both Concordia and its graduate students. The Awards Reception also expresses heartfelt thanks to those individuals, corporations and agencies which give financial and moral support to graduate studies at Concordia.

Winners were able to meet individual awards donors, business and industrial awards donors, representatives of granting agencies, various faculty, and each other in a congenial atmosphere. Students and other invited guests discussed the diverse and many projects which are being undertaken in graduate studies. The reception is one of the occasions during which one sees the assorted and eclectic intellectual interests of graduate students. There was much animated discussion and many new contacts were made. In great part this interaction is essential for the growth and development of students, faculty and the university as a whole.

The need for awards for graduate students is critical and our donors have recognized this fact. The depth of research and the intensity of thought demanded by graduate studies necessitates that there be an adequate base in awards funding.

Many thanks go out to departmental secretaries who helped contact students and distribute invitations during a disruption of mail service

Graduate Awards Reception: Phyllis Miyauchi (L) Community Affairs Representative, Shell Canada Ltd.; Steven Dubrovsky (C) Winner of the Shell Canada Ltd. Doctoral Fellowship; Sheldon Wamboldt (R) Manager, Process, Engineering Montréal East Refinery.

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